Open skies policy

154. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has welcomed the 'Open Skies' policy as announed by him in the recently concluded India-ASEAN summit;

(b) whether the country has adequate infrastructure to professionally and efficiently take care of this increase in air traffic;

(c) if so, whether our Traffic controllers, Emigration Staff, Security Staff, Airlines Handling personnel, etc. are geared up for this phenomenal increase in number of passengers; and

(d) whether Government propose to allow such foreign direct flights to comparatively small airports like Aurangabad, Pune, Nagpur, and at the same time, augment the physical infrastructure, deploying trained manpower, increasing the length of runways, taxi-tracks, etc. at such Airports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVILAVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) The Prime Minister had announced during the recently held ASEAN-lndia Summit that we would be willing to engage ASEAN authorities in a discussion on the proposal of 'open sky policy'.

(b) to (d) Improvement and upgradation of infrastructure facility is an on-going process and is taken up depending on demand/capacity basis. Government has already initiated several steps towards modernizing and improving the aviation infrastructure across the country. The international airporst at Delhi and Mumbai are being restructured with public-private participation. The development of Greenfield airports at Hyderabad and Bangalore is in full swing. Further, 35 non-metro cities/airports have been identified for upgradation, improvement and modernization of infrastructure facilities to meet the present and future demand. Airports Authority of India would develop the runway, taxiway, navigation, landing aids and CNS/ATM facilities at these airports. The request for traffic rights to foreign airlines to operate to smaller airports are granted depending upon the availability of necessary infratructure at these airports.